

T-574

c. 1870

Bless House

St. Michaels

private

The Bless house is a standard side hall/double pile frame house erected during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The basic two-story, three-bay house has a distinctive Victorian porch and a seamed tin roof. The entire front block is lighted by two-over-two sash windows. The interior has been slightly modified with the removal of the two partitions, one on each floor. The frame privy and garage standing behind the house are plain, but still significant outbuildings since only a few domestic outbuildings survive in St. Michaels.

The chain of title does not indicate clearly when this house was built since the property was owned by the Blades family from 1833 to 1920. Evidently, a house was located on the property at the time of transfer in 1841, when the estate of Levin Blades was partitioned. Specific mention is made of the "house, lot and premises where William Tarr now resides." (55/510). Samuel Blades occupied the Water Street lot until his death in 1889, when he leaves the house and lot "where I now reside" to his wife Elizabeth (Will 13/470). Amanda Blades Hamenstafer retained possession of the title until 1920 (185/124).

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. T-574

Magi No. 2105745504

DOE ☐ yes ☒ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common Bless House

## 2. Location

street & number 410 Water Street ☐ not for publicationcity, town St. Michaels ☐ vicinity of congressional district First

state Maryland county Talbot

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military <input type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Edwin Bless

street &amp; number 410 Water Street telephone no.:

city, town St. Michaels state and zip code MD 21663

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Talbot County Clerk of Court liber

street &amp; number Talbot County Courthouse folio

city, town Easton state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. T-574

### Condition

☐ excellent  
☒ good  
☐ fair

☐ deteriorated  
☐ ruins  
☐ unexposed

### Check one

☐ unaltered  
☒ altered

### Check one

☒ original site  
☐ moved      date of move \_\_\_\_\_

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### Bless House description

The Bless house is located at 410 Water Street in the eastern residential district of St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland. The two-story side hall/double pile frame house faces east with a north/south axis.

Built c. 1870, the two-story, three-bay frame house rests on a minimal brick foundation and is sheathed with asbestos siding over weatherboards. The steeply pitched roof, covered with standing seam tin, has extended eaves with short returns and a boxed cornice. Attached to the back of the house is a c. 1900-1920 kitchen wing. A frame garage and a pyramidal roofed privy stand behind the house.

The east (main) elevation is a three-bay facade with a side entrance in the south bay. The partially glazed door is framed by two-pane sidelights and a three-light transom. The adjacent two bays are filled with two over two sash windows. Covering the first floor is a turned post porch with decorative brackets and a square baluster handrail. The second floor is lighted by three unevenly spaced two over two sash windows. A patch in the tin roof indicates the former location of the interior chimney stack.

The north gable end of the main house has three two over two sash windows on the first and second floors, while the gable end is pierced by two evenly spaced two over two sash windows. The south gable end is lighted in a similar manner, and a large exhaust fan has been inserted between the two attic windows. The west (rear) elevation is fully covered by the two-story two-bay by one-room frame kitchen supported by an excavated, poured concrete foundation. The kitchen is lighted by six over six sash windows.

The modified side hall/double pile frame house has been altered with the removal of the hall partition to consolidate the hall and parlor into one room. The

Bless House description  
Page 2

open stringer stair remains in its original location with a heavily turned newel post, turned balusters, and a molded handrail. The front and back rooms are plainly finished with ogee molded baseboards. Four-panel doors open into the various first and second floor rooms. The second floor of the front block is divided into two principal rooms, while the kitchen wing is partitioned into a bedroom and storage room. An enclosed stair rises to the attic above the main stair.

The pyramidal roofed privy has novelty siding a wood shingle roof. The east side is marked by a four-panel door, while small window openings are located in the north side wall.

The single-story workshop stands directly behind the kitchen and is supported by a concrete foundation. The asbestos sheathed frame structure is covered by a sheet tin roof. The ridge is capped and the gable ends are trimmed with decorative tin finials. A large access door and a six over six sash windows mark the south wall.

## 8. Significance

Survey No.

T-574

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

**Specific dates****Builder/Architect**check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/orApplicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ GLevel of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Bless house is a standard two-story side hall/double pile frame house erected during the third quarter of the nineteenth century. The basic two-story three-bay by three-bay house has a distinctive Victorian period porch. The interior has been slightly modified with the removal of two partitions. The frame privy and garage standing behind the house are plain, but nevertheless significant outbuildings, since few domestic or work outbuildings survive in St. Michaels.

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. T-574

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting Northing

B 

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Zone Easting Northing

C 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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Verbal boundary description and justification

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Paul Touart - Architectural Historian

organization Historic St. Michaels

date 10/31/85

street &amp; number

telephone

city or town St. Michaels

state MD

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

BLESS - LEE HOUSE

Year: 1985 Vol: 604 Page: 445

From: George Sandford Lee, Jr PersRep of Edith Dodson Lee, dcd.. Price: \$92,500

To : Edwin G Bless, Jr.

Notes: Begin at the NE corner of this lot and the SE corner of a lot of John H Yeamen (573/714) run with Water Street S 20,37" E 64.25' to a lot of Samuel Albert Smith & Jewell Smith Blanchfield (546/78) S 69,23" W 120' to land of the Commissioners of St Michaels (157/489) then N 20,37" W 64.25' to Yeamen; with Yeamen N 69,23" E 120' to the beginning.

Comprises part of 1954, 315/96, Grace B. Burns to George S Lee & Edith D. Lee and all of 1942, 252/344, Margaret A and Herman E Nixdorf to George S Lee and Edith D Lee.

George S Lee died 23 July 1971 leaving the property to his wife who died 22 Sept 1984.

1985, 604/447 is a mortgage for \$81,000 from the Blesses to Philip E L Dietz, Jr and Christopher Burlee Kehoe for Eleanor M Bergen lender.

This deed does not include the right-of-way through the Caulk lot across the street.

Year: 1954 Vol: 315 Page: 96

From: Grace B Burns, widow Price: \$5

To : George S & Edith D Lee

Notes: See deed attached. There are two parcels. Parcel 1 is a small lot of 27'9" on Water Street adjoining Parcel 2 which is an original St. Michaels lot, 60 x 120. This lot, on which the house is located, is lot number 45 of the 58 lots of James Braddock.

Year: 1954 Vol: 312 Page: 467

From: G Elbert Marshall & wife Price:

To : Grace B Burns

Notes: This is a title clearance(as stated in the deed)for the purpose of conveying all of Ernest Burns' property to his wife.

Conveyed to G Elbert Marshall by the heirs of Ernest H Burns, 1954, 312/462. There are two parcels and the same decription as 1954, 315/96.

Year: 1954 Vol: 312 Page: 462

From: heirs of Ernest H Burns Price:

To : G Elbert & Merele Marshall

Notes: The first step in a title clearance. It is somewhat complicated, in that Burns had the property in the name of "Ernest H Burns, Inc"; when the corporation was dissolved, Burns became the owner of the house; however, the deed was never written.

Parcel 2, containing the house was conveyed to Ernest H Burns, Inc. by George R Caulk & Son , 1921, 190/115.

Year: 1921 Vol: 190 Page: 115

From: George R Caulk & Son Price: \$5

To : Ernest H Burns, Inc.

Notes: The lot is 60 x 120 and includes a right-of-way for a sewer pipe across the property of George R Caulk across the street.

Conveyed to George R Caulk by Amanda R Hamenstafer, 1920, 185/124.

Year: 1920 Vol: 185 Page: 124

From: Amanda Blades Hamenstafer, widow Price: \$5

To : George R Caulk & Son

Notes: Lot 60 x 120. The property was awarded to Samuel H Blades, dcd. by deed of award from William Townsend and John Harrington, Commissioners 10 April 1841 at a division of the property of Levin Blades (55/510). It was devised by Samuel H Blades, 1889, 13/470 (will) to his wife Elizabeth then to his daughter Amanda Blades Hamenstafer. In 1916 the property was sold for taxes by Joseph B Harrington, County Treasurer to Ernest H Burns and afterwards redeemed by Amanda Hamenstafer.

Year: 1889 Vol: 13 Page: 470 (WILL)

From: Samuel Blades Price:

To :

Notes: The will leaves to his wife Elizabeth Blades the house and lot on Water Street "where I now reside". On his wife's death the property goes to his daughter, Amanda Blades.

Year: 1841 Vol: 55 Page: 510

From: Wm. Townsend and John Harrington, Commissioners Price:

To : Ann Blades and others

Notes: The division of Levin Blades, dcd, property. Of the various awards, the one of interest here is the allotment to Samuel Blades of "the house, lot, and premises where William Tarr now resides" by paying his brother Levin \$30. Conveyed to Levin Blades by Greenbury Griffin, 1833, 50/529.

Year: 1833 Vol: 50 Page: 529

From: Greenbury Griffin (of Queen Anne's County) Price: \$200

To : Levin Blades

Notes: The property here conveyed was (1) lot number 45, 60 x 120; (2) a half part of lot number 38 (the other half of which had been given by James Braddock to the Methodist Church); (3) lot number 39. Two and a half lots for \$200 would almost seem as though there were no dwellings on any of them (?) Conveyed by John Denny, of Queen Anne's County, to Greenbury Griffin, 1817, 40/11.



Year: 1817 Vol: 40 Page: 11  
From: John Denny, Queen Anne's County Price: \$500  
To : Greenbury Griffin  
Notes: The deal was for lots 45, 1/2 38, and 39. These were the same three lots that Griffin had lost by a judgement against him in 1812.  
Conveyed to John Denny by John Bennett, Sheriff, 1812,35/197.

Year: 1812 Vol: 35 Page: 197  
From: John Bennett, Sheriff Price: \*  
To : John Denny  
Notes: \* It is not clear, but it appears that lot 45 sold for p45 plus \$7.45 charges and that 1/2 38 and 39 brought \$125.  
The sale was the result of a judgement for damages against Griffin in a suit brought by Andrew Duveer (?) and John Miles.  
Lot number 45 was conveyed to Mary Griffin, wife of Greenbury by Thomas Kemp, 1798, 27/505.

Year: 1798 Vol: 27 Page: 505  
From: Thomas Kemp Price: gift  
To : Mary Griffin  
Notes: Mary Griffin was daughter of Thomas Kemp and wife of Greenbury Griffin.  
At the same time Kemp also gave lot number 44 to his daughter Rachel Wrightson.  
Conveyed to Thomas Kemp by James Ball, 1791, 24/229.

Year: 1791 Vol: 24 Page: 229  
From: James Ball Price: p60cm  
To : Thomas Kemp  
Notes: Deed is for lots 44, 45, and 46.  
Nothing has been found as to how James Ball obtained these lots.  
The three lots were purchased by Lewis Davis, "Gent." from James Braddock in 1782, 21/474.

Year: 1782 Vol: 21 Page: 274

From: James Braddock Price: p40cm

To : Lewis Davis

Notes: Lewis Davis, "Gent." is described in the deed as "a subject of the kingdom of France". I have found nothing so far, as to who Lewis Davis was, where he came from or what happened to him. There is nothing in the land records at Easton as to what happened to lots 44, 45, and 46 which he purchased at this time. The lots were sold in August of 1782 and were the last sold by Braddock before his death (his will was probated in September, 1782).

The tract from which the lots were taken is not stated in the deed. It would appear from tract names in other deeds in the immediate area that they were on the original boundary between "Janes Progress" and "The Beach" and were actually in "Janes Progress". The chain would then run back through Wetheral, and Hewes to the Hattons.

315 96

Estate of Maryland, Talbot County, To-wit: Received the 4th day of August, A.D. 1954, at 1:20 o'clock P. M. to be recorded, and same day recorded in Liber JTB No. 315 folio 96, one of the Land Record Books of Talbot County.

Per John T. Baynard

Clerk

THIS DEED, Made this 2nd day of August, in the year one thousand, nine hundred and fifty-four, by Grace B. Burns, widow, of Talbot County and State of Maryland.

WITNESSETH, That in consideration of Five Dollars and other good and valuable considerations, the said Grace B. Burns, widow, does hereby grant and convey unto George J. Lee and Edith D. Lee, his wife, tenants by the entireties, their assigns, and to the survivor of them, his or her heirs and assigns, in fee simple.

ALL those two lots or parcels of ground on Water Street in St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland, and more particularly described as follows, viz:--

ONE: All and singular that lot or parcel of ground described as follows:--

Beginning for the same at a point on Water Street at the southwest corner of a lot of ground owned by Ernest H. Burns, in his lifetime, and running with said Water Street a southwardly direction 27 feet, 9 inches, to a lot formerly owned by W. W. Fairbank, thence westwardly with said Fairbank lot 125 feet to a lot formerly owned by the Board of County School Commissioners of Talbot County (previously thereto by Lewis B. Ross), thence northwardly 27 feet, 9 inches to the Ernest H. Burns' lot, thence Eastwardly 125 feet to the place of beginning.

TWO: All and singular that lot of ground described as follows:--

Beginning for the same on the West side of Water Street and fronting on said Street 60 feet, running back a Westerly direction 120 feet, more or less, adjoining on the South property owned by Ernest H. Burns, in his lifetime, and an old Methodist Protestant Cemetery on the North and West, together with the



75  
LAW OFFICES  
G. ELMERT MARSHALL  
EASTON, MARYLAND

Examined and Delivered to G. Elbert Marshall 8-24-54

appurtenant right-of-way heretofore granted and conveyed from George R. Caulk and others unto Ernest H. Burns, Inc., its successors and assigns, in fee simple, by deed bearing date of July 22, 1921, and recorded in Talbot County Land Record Liber No. 190, folio 115, for use of the property above described, said right-of-way or easement being over, through and under the property of said George R. Caulk, then occupied by him as a residence and lying on the east side of said Water Street in the said Town of St. Michaels, Maryland, and opposite the above-described land and premises, and being for the construction, use and maintenance of a sewer pipe or line extending through and under the property of said Caulk abovementioned to the Waters of Miles River.

TCWJUA  
The parcels of land and appurtenant right-of-way above described and intended herein to be granted and conveyed were conveyed from Grace B. Burns, and others, unto G. Elbert Marshall and Lerle B. Marshall, his wife, by deed dated April 14, 1954, and recorded in Talbot County Land Record Liber No. 312, folio 462, &c., and by said grantors reconveyed unto said Grace B. Burns, by deed dated April 14, 1954, and recorded in Talbot County Land Record Liber No. 312, folio 467, &c.

TOGETHER WITH the buildings and improvements, thereon erected, made or being; and all and every, the rights, alleys, ways, waters, privileges, appurtenances and advantages, to the same belonging, or in any wise appertaining.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said land and premises; above described and mentioned, and hereby intended to be conveyed; together with the rights, privileges, appurtenances and advantages thereto belonging, or appertaining unto and to the proper use and benefit of the said George S. Lee and Edith D. Lee, his wife, tenants by the entirety, their assigns, and to the survivor of them, his or her heirs and assigns, in fee simple.

DEED

T-574

MARGARET A. NIXDORF and HERMAN E. NIXDORF, her husband : Be it remembered that on this 11th day of April A. D. 1942, at 11 o'clock A. M. the following Deed or Instrument of writing

TO : was received to be recorded, and is accordingly enrolled as follows, to wit:

GEORGE S. LEE and EDITH D. LEE, his wife : THIS DEED, Made this 10th day of April, in the year one thousand three hundred and ninety-two, by Margaret A. Nixdorf and U.S. INTERNAL REVENUE \$3.00 \$1.65 : and nine hundred and forty-two, by Margaret A. Nixdorf and Herman E. Nixdorf, her husband, of Talbot County, State of Maryland.

WITNESSETH, that in consideration of the sum of Five (\$5.00) Dollars and other food and valuable considerations, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, and the assumption of a Mortgage in the principal sum of One Thousand Eight Hundred (\$1,800.00) Dollars from the said Margaret A. Nixdorf and Herman E. Nixdorf, her husband, to the St. Michaels Bank dated May 2, 1940 and duly of record among the Land Record Books of Talbot County in Liber T. J. F. No. 246, folio 535, the said Margaret A. Nixdorf and Herman E. Nixdorf, her husband, do grant and convey unto George S. Lee and Edith D. Lee, his wife, of Talbot County, State of Maryland, as tenants by the entireties, their heirs and assigns, in fee-simple, all that lot or parcel of ground situate, lying and being in the Town of St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland, and described as follows, that is to say:

BEGINNING for the same at the Southeast corner of the lot of ground formerly owned by Samuel H. Blades, deceased, on the West side of Water Street in said Town, and running thence Southwardly with said Street thirty-six and one-half feet (36½') to a stone planted in the ground; thence Westwardly one hundred and twenty feet (120') to a lot belonging to R. C. Ross; thence Northwardly with said Ross lot and the Old Graveyard of the M. E. Church thirty-six and one-half feet (36½') to the Southwest corner of said Blades lot; thence Eastwardly with said Blades lot one hundred and twenty feet (120') to the place of beginning.

BEING the same lot or parcel of ground which was conveyed unto the said Margaret A. Nixdorf by Alfred G. Nixdorf by Deed dated May 3, 1933 and duly of record among the Land Record Books of Talbot County in Liber No. 230, folio 329.

TOGETHER with the buildings and improvements thereon erected, made or being; and all and every, the rights, alleys, ways, waters, privileges, appurtenances and advantages, to the same belonging, or in any wise appertaining.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD said lot or parcel of ground and premises above described and mentioned, and hereby intended to be conveyed; together with the rights, privileges, appurtenances and advantages thereto belonging or appertaining unto and to the proper use and benefit of the said George S. Lee and Edith D. Lee, his wife, as tenants by the entireties, their heirs and assigns, in fee-simple.

AND the said Margaret A. Nixdorf and Herman E. Nixdorf, her husband, hereby covenant that they will warrant specially the property hereby granted and conveyed, and that they will execute such further assurances of said property as may be requisite.

AS WITNESS the hands and seals of said grantors.

TEST:

Fred J. Greenfield, Jr.  
(Fred J. Greenfield, Jr.)

Margaret A. Nixdorf (SEAL)  
(Margaret A. Nixdorf)

Herman E. Nixdorf (SEAL)  
(Herman E. Nixdorf)

Examined and sealed Geo. S. Lee St. Michaels Md. 4/10/42

T-574

DR. DODSON'S  
↓

T-574

ST. MARY'S

SQUARE

METHODIST  
CEMETERY

BACK CREEK

MAP  
OF  
ST. MICHAELS

TALBOT CO. MARYLAND

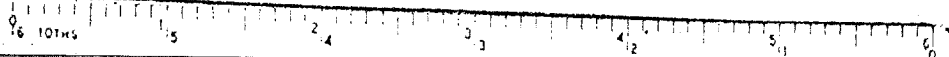
SCALE

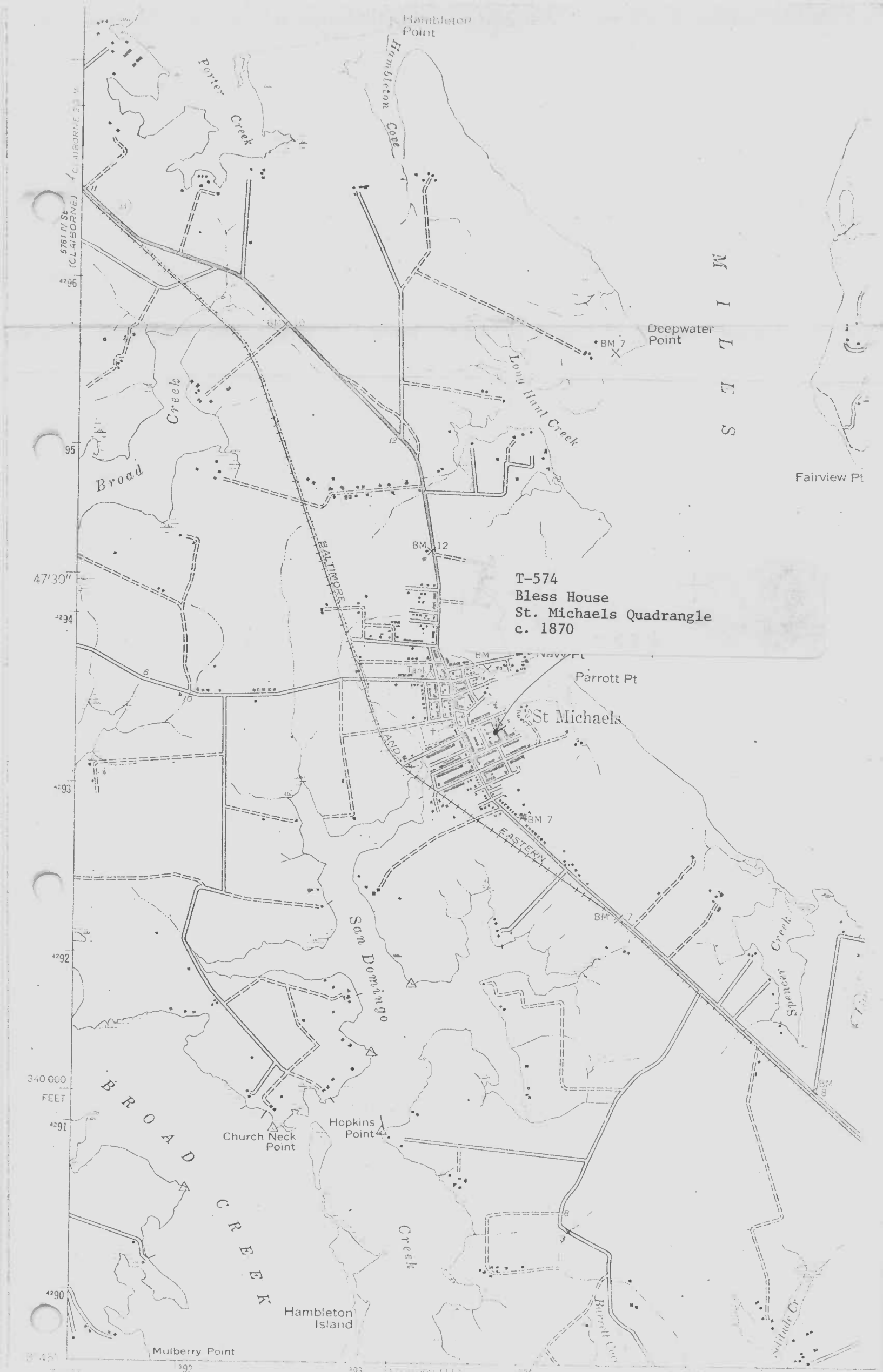
1 INCH = 1 MILE

JAN. 1, 1893.

THOMAS

DEARD









Bless House

T-574

St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland  
east elevation

8/85 Paul Touart photographer

negative/Maryland Historical Trust



Bless House

T-574

St. Michaels, Talbot County, MD

northeast elevation

8/85 Paul Touart photographer

negative/Maryland Historical Trust



BLESS HOUSE

T-574

Garage/Workshop-South Elevation

St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland

8/85, Paul Touart, Photographer

NEG/MD. Historical Trust



BLESS HOUSE

T-574

Privy - Northeast Elevation

St. Michaels, Talbot County, Maryland

8/85, Paul Touart, Photographer

NEG/MD. Historical Trust